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# CHRISTIAN GIVING

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*Southern California-Arizona*
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# CHRISTIAN GIVING

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BY

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# I.

# MEAGERNESS OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

## A PRAYER FOR LIBERALITY.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, though Thou wast rich yet for our sakes didst become poor, grant that all overeagerness and covetousness of earthly goods may die in me, and the desire of heavenly things may live and grow in me; keep me from all idle and vain expenses, that I may always have to give to Thy kingdom its due, and that giving not grudgingly nor of necessity, but cheerfully, I may be loved of Thee, and be made through Thy merits a partaker of the riches of Thy heavenly treasure. Amen.

—Epworth Herald.

## MEAGERNESS OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

At the opening of the twentieth century there is much in the Christian Church to call forth gratitude and inspire hope. The century past has seen great progress. Numerically the increase has been marked, from 200,000,000 at the beginning of the century to 477,000,000 at its close, and it has now come to pass that in the number of followers the Christian religion exceeds any other religion, and includes about one-third of the human race.

It has been a century of missionary effort beyond any other for a thousand years, and now there are few lands that the missionary has not penetrated with the religion of the cross. The Christian population of Asia and Africa, the two pagan

continents, is estimated, respectively, at 12,490,000 and 4,400,000.[1]

Within this hundred years American Methodism has increased from 65,000 to 5,900,000, and the Methodist Episcopal Church from 65,000 to 2,900,000. If the population of the United States had increased during this period at the same rate that the Methodist Episcopal Church has increased, it would now be 232,000,000, and if at the rate that all American Methodism has increased it would now be 483,000,000 instead of 76,300,000.

The material prosperity of the Church has also been great and the increase in wealth rapid. Christian education has been marvelously advanced, schools and colleges abound, and the Church is a greater influence in the world to-day than ever before.

In these, and other things that might be enumerated, there is reason for profound

[1]M. Fournier de Flaix, in quarterly of the American Statistical Association for March, 1892.

gratitude to Almighty God. We would not underrate, much less disparage, the work that has been done. But while we rejoice in the victories of the past and the achievements of the present, we must not flatter ourselves that we have done all that we could or all that we should have done. There is cause for gratitude, but no cause for boasting.

In one matter at least, that of "tithes and offerings," it is apparent that we have not measured up to our obligations. With a material prosperity far beyond any other age, and with such opportunities as were never before presented to the Church our offerings to the Lord have been entirely too meager. Tens of thousands awaiting baptism and asking for Christian teachers which we do not send them, missionary societies burdened with debt and missionaries' salaries reduced, hundreds of schools closed for want of funds, oppressive debts on local Churches, unfinished and unendowed hospitals, are standing protests

against our indifference and want of liberality. There are said to be a million non-givers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, about one-third of the entire membership; and undoubtedly many others give less than duty demands.

We expended in 1901 about five dollars a member on the maintenance of our home Churches, ministerial support, and incidental expenses, and about two dollars on church-building. Although usually thought of as gifts, these sums are largely spent for the convenience, comfort, and instruction of the givers. They are not therefore purely charitable or benevolent, and yet it seems clear that we may properly include them in our offerings to the Lord. But although given in part for our own immediate and personal good, yet even these offerings are too often grudgingly given, and in order that salaries may be raised and other current expenses met, various doubtful methods of raising the money are resorted to.

For pure benevolences, gifts to missionary and other similar work, the Church reported in 1901 a total of $2,822,437, or 98 cents per member.

The average annual income in the United States is now $200 per capita. The average for members in our Church would not be less but rather more than the average for the entire population, for few infants and small children (who have no income) are counted in the membership of the Church, while all such are counted in estimating the average income of the nation; but allowing it to be just the same, $200 per capita, the income of the Church for one year is $600,000,000. Of this we give $24,000,000, or four per cent.

With work abundant, wages and prices good, with unprecedented harvests, business and commerce flourishing, and with an era of prosperity seldom if ever equaled, it is cause for humiliation of heart that of our abundance we have not honored the

Lord with more than four per cent of our income.

Moreover, it is to be feared that the ratio of giving is not increasing any among our people. Mr. L. G. Powers, one of the chief statisticians of the United States Census Bureau, estimates that the material wealth of the United States increased twenty-five billion dollars, or forty per cent, between 1890 and 1900. He tells us that this twenty-five billion dollars of increase exceeds the savings of all the people of the American Hemisphere from the time Columbus discovered America until the outbreak of the Civil War. He maintains that it is even greater than the savings of the entire race from Adam's day until Independence was declared in 1776. And of all this enormous increase members of the Christian Church have received their full share, and yet those of our communion are actually giving less per capita for foreign missions than they did thirty

years ago. It is a great shame, a sin that we must face at the judgment.

Nor do other denominations seem to do much better. A Congregationalist authority, while believing that the Congregationalists, with the exception of the Moravians, are the largest givers in the United States, estimates their annual gifts at four per cent of their average income.

Many heathen nations have made far greater sacrifices to sustain their idolatrous worship. The Mormons of our own country strictly require their members to devote one-tenth of their income to the spread of their faith. The Chinese spend annually one hundred million dollars on their ancestral worship. Among this people no day begins without an offering to the idol, and no meal is eaten till a portion has been set aside for the god. The children are trained from infancy to place their gifts of rice or incense before the idol. A heathen woman said to a missionary:

"Well, I worship God too; but I take a few sticks of incense when I pray. It seems so mean to go before Him with just nothing." Missionaries testify to the expensiveness of the heathen religions, and of the liberality of those converted from heathenism to Christianity.

A Sabbath-school in Persia, averaging thirty-six members, gave in one year $36.50 for missions. Yet these people were so poor that very few of the members of the school had ever owned a silver piece of money. A Church of one hundred and sixty-five members in India raised in one year $566.85 for mission work, an average of $3.50 a member. A converted African who had given until he had found the blessedness of it exclaimed, "Me give one dollar last year; me give four dollars this year, one for every quarter of de world." He thought it over awhile and then said, "No; me love Africa more dan other countries; me give two dollars to Africa," and his subscription for the year was five dol-

lars. At Kucheng, China, after a sermon by Dr. J. H. Worley, two hundred people signed a pledge to give one-tenth of their income to the Lord. On the list were twenty-four native preachers — all that were present—and a number of students, business men, and teachers. The depth of their consecration can be better realized when it is remembered that these people are very poor, the preachers receiving about thirty dollars a year, a salary so scant that it is sometimes difficult to provide sufficient food and clothing for themselves and their families.

But we in this most favored land, living under the blessing of civilization and religion, the wealthiest people of the globe give four per cent of our income to the Lord. What have we done with the immense increase in wealth referred to by Mr. Powers? How have we spent it? Have our gifts increased proportionately? The American people are not unwilling to spend money for that which appeals to

national pride, or for their own ease or comfort. It costs more to build one warship than the Methodist Episcopal Church spends in a year for home and foreign missions. We spend half a million dollars to welcome home our heroic Admiral Dewey, or to extend courtesies to a foreign prince who comes to make us a friendly visit, and no one objects to it. We spend for needless, not to say harmful, luxuries incredible sums every year. Though we spend our money so ungrudgingly for such purposes, only the most constant and earnest appeals can lead us to give four per cent of our income to all kinds of Church and charity work. This, every one must admit, is entirely inadequate to the demand, entirely unworthy our ability, and, let us hope, far less than we will give in the near future.

# II.

# CAUSE OF THE PRESENT STATE.

2 17

And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the Lord. And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem, to bring into the house of the Lord the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness.

And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest until they had made an end.

Now it came to pass that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest and took it and carried it to its place again. And thus they did day by day and gathered money in abundance.

And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work. . . . And the workmen wrought and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in His state and strengthened it.

And when they had finished it they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the Lord, even vessels to minister and to offer withal.

—2 Chron. xxiv, 8-14.

## CAUSE OF THE PRESENT STATE.

In a general way we might look for the cause of this condition in the intense materialism of the day. The love of money in every age has been a "root of evil," but in the eagerness of its race for wealth this age outstrips every preceding one. Naturally this has its effect on the question of Church finances and all philanthropic giving. But leaving out of account this selfish spirit that is characteristic of humanity in every age, we may discover some other things that have contributed to the state of affairs that we so much deplore, and in bringing them to the light may, perhaps, provide for their removal.

First of all is the lack of proper instruction. In this, as in everything else, men

must know their duty if they are to perform it, and surely in this matter such instruction has not been sufficient. Until within a few years little was heard on this subject. It was not much discussed at Conventions or Conferences, and sermons relating to this duty were very infrequent. Sermons on the great doctrines of the Bible and on a great variety of themes which relate to practical life abound, but this grace has not by any means been insisted on with the frequency and pointedness that its importance demands.

It is often said, Let the Church be revived spiritually, and it will give liberally. And so it will, provided it is made to see clearly its duty; otherwise it will not. A quickened conscience and spiritual state of mind put one in readiness to perform duty, and, further, to recognize duty when presented, but by no means remove the necessity of such presentation. When the Church is revived is the time, there-

fore, not to keep silent, but to speak on this subject.

Not only has there been a lack in the amount of instruction, but such teaching as has been given has not always been wise, and sometimes has been so indefinite as to accomplish little good. Men have been told that they ought to give, that they ought to give more than they do, that the amounts given are shamefully small and inadequate to the demand; and that a high law requires all. And yet they are left in as much uncertainty as ever as to the amount *they* ought to give.

They are told to give all they can afford, or what they think they ought to give, or to give until they feel it; that is, until it will be a real sacrifice to them. There is no doubt wisdom in this last suggestion. God does not want simply that of which we do not ourselves feel any need. For our own sakes, to keep our own hearts free and pure, we need to deny ourselves and

give until we feel it. But, after all, this is inadequate as a statement of duty, for who does not know that some "feel it" almost before they begin to give at all? Feeling is therefore an insufficient guide in this as in other religious duties.

If the Bible contains any rule or statement by which one can determine what part of his income should be paid into the Lord's treasury, then by all means let it be widely and frequently published, and let men not be left to think that when they have given until they feel it, or as much as A or B has given, they have discharged their obligation to the Giver of all good.

Again there is reason to believe frequent references to the widow's mite, and exhortations to give if only a little, and illustrations of what great aggregates would result from each one giving a small amount, have led some to think that only small amounts are expected from them. Not only is it true that we would receive more largely from God if our faith were

stronger and we asked more largely, but it is also true that if our faith in men were larger and we asked more largely we would receive more from them.

Another reason is found in the wrong methods that have been used to collect money. There are methods of agriculture that tend to make the soil still more productive, and there are other methods that harden the ground and lock up its resources the more securely. So there are methods of collecting money that benefit the giver and prepare the way for still greater liberality in the future, and there are other methods that dry up the springs of liberality and decrease the contributions to every worthy cause.

Sometimes the subject has been belittled by pleasantries and jokes about the collection basket, or by references to "begging" for the Church, that tend to produce contempt at least for the manner, if not for the cause. A church is to be dedicated or some other occasion for raising money

exists, and some one who has a reputation as a pocketbook opener stands before the congregation, and by witticisms and anecdotes, pathetic or humorous, the people are wrought up to a pitch where they will subscribe. But there is afterward a reaction. Some perhaps subscribed more than they ought, some *think* they did and are sorry, and some are so sorry that they do not pay what they subscribed. How much better to have presented this matter to the people publicly and privately, explaining their duty and their great privilege of giving to the Lord, so that when the day came they would have been ready deliberately, conscientiously, and in the name of God, to have laid their offerings on the altar, and to have gone away blessed and rejoicing! No reaction and no shrinkage would follow such subscribing and giving. In this very manner some magnificent triumphs have been secured.

Another thing that has contributed to the present state of affairs is the resort to

entertainments, suppers, and various other methods for the raising of money. Of late this has become nothing less than a rage, Churches large and small, rich and poor, Protestant and Catholic, associations, societies, lodges, hospitals, and colleges, all resorting again and again to these methods, and some depending largely upon them for support. The more this is depended upon, the more it will have to be depended upon, for the education is in the wrong direction. It leads men to expect a return in kind, and to think they are benevolent when there is not the least benevolence in it. To say nothing of the fact that this can scarcely be honoring to God, such methods quench the spirit of liberality and hinder its practice. In some places at least the Church has been hindered in its influence and work by its financial methods. It ought to be a model in all things. Business men ought to be able to turn to its methods and find in it an example worthy their imitation. Of all work, the Lord's

work ought to be the most accurately, systematically, and properly carried on, and nothing that is the least suggestive of inaccuracy, looseness, or impropriety should ever be tolerated. Then will men of business, in common with all others, respect it for its commendable methods.

A new movement has already started that has in it great promise. It aims to instruct men and persuade them to adopt the Bible rule of proportionate giving. Within the last few years it has been frequently discussed in various assemblies, and the Society of Christian Endeavor, the Baptist Young People's Union, the Epworth League, and other organizations have inaugurated campaigns and are circulating pledges among young people to give proportionately at least one-tenth of their net income.

# III.

# THE REASONS FOR GIVING.

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For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.
—2 Cor. viii, 9.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. —1 Tim. vi, 17.

Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. —Eccl. v, 19.

The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; He bringeth low and lifteth up. —1 Sam. ii, 7.

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it. —Prov. x, 22.

The benefit we receive must be rendered again line for line, cent for cent, deed for deed, to somebody. Beware of too much good staying in your hand. It will fast corrupt. Put it away quickly in some sort.
—Emerson.

But, after all, the duty of giving is based upon no selfish consideration. We ought to give, not that we may be, but because we have been, blessed; not for self's sake, but for love of Him who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. What shall we render unto the Lord for this unspeakable gift? Is any ointment of spikenard too costly for the anointing of His feet—the feet that were shod with the sandals of salvation? —A. J. Burrell.

## THE REASONS FOR GIVING.

The first reason for giving is the need of the world, never more pressing than to-day. The work that Christianity has accomplished is magnificent, but much remains yet to be done. So much of the world still "lieth in wickedness." At home there is the problem of poverty, the evangelizing of our great cities, and of large numbers of those who come to us from other lands. There is the black race in America rising grandly from a state of servitude, but having yet a long way to travel before the emancipation of heart and mind is achieved; and the lowly white people of the South just struggling out of their "almost hopeless state of poverty, subordination, and contempt," only one in four of whom, in some States, can read

and write,—all these classes needing the utmost assistance we can give them.

Yet this is but little compared with the need in heathen countries. There are probably 400,000,000 people within the Chinese Empire, 300,000,000 in India, and a total of 850,000,000 in the entire continent of Asia, 150,000,000 in Africa, besides other millions on the islands of the sea; and of these more than 1,000,000,000 people, less than 17,000,000 are even nominally Christian. Allowing that the Christian population of those lands has increased 10,000,000 in the last century, the heathen population has in the same time increased 200,000,000. Of the 1,000,000,000 heathen not less than 12,000,000 die annually without the knowledge of Christ.

There is no need to recount here the darkness of their minds, the low state of morals, the sorrows of heathenism; it is sufficient to remark that those who have labored longest among them and know them

best, have the highest appreciation of all that is most worthy in their beliefs and in their morals, and at the same time are the most profoundly impressed with the sadness of their condition and their need of Christianity.

And never was the opportunity so great as now. Doors are everywhere open inviting to missionary activity. The most urgent appeals for help come from China. Since the Boxer trouble the missionary work has sprung into new life, and once more the blood of the martyrs has become the seed of the Church. In Japan a remarkable religious awakening is in progress, and there are indications that with sufficient missionary agencies at work the entire nation might speedily become Christian. Korea is now open to the gospel, and in increasing numbers the people are accepting it. In Southern Asia a hundred thousand people are seeking baptism. In Africa marvelous progress has recently been made, and pathetic appeals are com-

ing from that dark land. In our new possessions, Porto Rico and the Philippine Islands, multitudes are awaiting the gospel, and now Tibet, so long closed to the rest of the world, seems likely to have its door forced open, and to become a field for missionary operations.

This awakening of the world and opening of opportunity fills us with wonder and joy, but the thought of the unreadiness and unwillingness to meet the demand overwhelms us with sorrow. Truly "the harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

Another reason for giving is gratitude to God—gratitude for temporal blessings, for health, for domestic happiness, for the wealth we may by His blessing have acquired, and for all other things belonging to the life of this present world, and, above all, for His spiritual grace and the rich provision for our souls' need made for us in and through Jesus His Son. When we think of these inestimable gifts the cry of our hearts should be: "What shall I

render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"

Throughout Christendom ingratitude is looked upon as the most base and shameful of all sins, and concerning the bitterness that it causes, Shakespeare says: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" Even savages look upon gratitude for favors as one of the greatest of virtues, and it was a heathen philosopher who said, "An ingrate is earth's ugliest product."

Of all persons it is the most shameful for a *Christian* to be ungrateful, for his are the greatest blessings. He ought to feel that no offering that he can make is too good, no sacrifice too great for Him who has given us all. No ointment of spikenard is too costly to pour at His feet. For the sake of Him who became poor that we might be made rich we should be moved to the greatest love and gratitude. If we do not feel this in a way that leads us to give freely of all our blessings, what-

ever they may be, we may well suspect the reality of our consecration and the sincerity of our religion. Say what we may about other motives for giving, this is the very highest and most important of all. The proposition that gratitude to God should lead us to give charitable gifts receives added force from the fact that God gives us power to get wealth. Not only in a general way He blesses us with health, intelligence, opportunity, and fruitful seasons, but in many cases He gives us special blessings. Some people have a genius for money-making. Midas-like, everything they touch turns to gold. However unsuccessfully others may struggle, these have only to stretch out their hands and they are filled. This genius is a gift of the Creator, as truly as is the gift of poetry or art.

Men sometimes forget this. They take too much credit to themselves for their prosperity. Unconsciously they fall into the habit of thinking, "Is not this great

Babylon which I have builded?" "Am I not the creator and master of my own fortune?"

God warned the Israelites to beware lest when they had eaten and were full, and their flocks and herds were multiplied, and their silver and gold had increased, their hearts would be lifted up, "And thou say in thine heart my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth."

When David was about to turn the kingdom over to Solomon, whom he had charged to build a house for the Lord, and when the people had poured into the treasury a marvelous offering with which to build it, David offered unto the Lord this prayer: "Blessed art Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the victory and the majesty:

for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; . . . both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all, and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. . . . O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand and all is Thine own."

"For what, or who are we, alas!
That we in giving are so free?
Thine own before our offering was,
And all we have we have from Thee.

For we are guests and strangers here.
As were our fathers in Thy sight;
Our days but shadow-like appear,
And suddenly they take their flight."

Closely allied with this is another important fact. Certain obligations arising from the nature of things, from our relation to God and our fellows, require us to share our blessings with others. The French have a proverb,—*Noblesse oblige*—rank imposes obligation. Those who themselves are highly blessed have an obligation to the less fortunate.

Guizot utters this profound truth in his "History of Civilization:" "When a man acquires a new truth—when his being in his own eyes has made an advance, has acquired a new gift, immediately there becomes added to this acquirement the notion of a mission. He feels obliged, impelled as it were, by a secret instinct, to extend, to carry out of himself the change, the melioration which has been accomplished within him. To what but this do we owe the exertion of great reformers? The exertions of those great benefactors of the human race who have changed the face of the world. after having first been changed

themselves, have been stimulated and governed by no other impulse than this."

And is not this the thought of the apostle Paul when he says: "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also?" He had received little from the Greeks and less yet from the barbarians. His indebtedness did not arise from favors received from them, but from the fact that they needed favors which he, having received from heaven, could impart to them. Such is his relation to them as brother men, and to God as the Father of all, that the obligation is upon him to share with them his blessings. Every vision of God, every gift from God, creates in us this responsibility. We can not in any way shift it or rid ourselves of it. There is but one thing to do—bear the responsibility, share the blessing.

This is just as true of the material blessing of wealth, as it is of the intellectual

blessings that Guizot had in mind, or the spiritual blessings that were uppermost in Paul's thought. No matter what the blessing be, the principle holds good, and the fact of its possession creates the duty of sharing it with others. "Freely ye have received, freely give," is everywhere the Christian law.

But clear and strong as are these reasons for giving, and convincing as they ought to be, in order that we should be without excuse there is added the positive command of the Word of God. The Jews were commanded to give. They had an elaborate system of tithes and offerings. They were commanded to bring the firstfruits of their harvest, the tithe of the increase of their flocks and herds, and were severely rebuked when they failed to bring "all the tithes into the storehouse."

In the New Testament our duty is set before us in such texts as the following:

"Give and it shall be given unto you."

"Give alms of such things as ye have."

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

"Charge them that are rich in this world . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, ready to communicate."

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Jesus exalted the duty of almsgiving, and placed it, Dr. Wayland used to say, on a level with prayer and a holy life. He did not teach that wealth in itself is a sin. Industry and thrift that lead to the accumulation of wealth are commendable virtues. But covetousness, love of money, and *selfish* enjoyment of it are sinful. Jesus warned the people against these sins in language that fairly blisters. Men have sought in various ways to explain away, or avoid the force of His words, but without

success. No changing conditions, no lapse of time can change the truth. "The centuries have not bulged the needle's eye." It may be said as truly now as then, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter in!"

Is anything further needed? Surely the need of the world, our gratitude to God, our obligation to God, and our relation to men, the express command of the Word, and the personal danger of covetousness,—any of these singly, much more all combined, should open the springs of our liberality.

# IV.

# THE REWARD FOR GIVING.

O, the luxury, the thrilling, wondrous, unspeakable luxury of giving! —Joseph Parker.

A man there was—the people called him mad—
The more he gave away, the more he had.
—John Bunyan.

"I have lost a good deal lately."

"Have you? I will tell you why."

"I do not know how it is, but now according to the strong image of the prophet I feel that I have put my money into bags with holes in them."

"Yes, I know how it was my dear sir, and I will tell you. You gave up giving, and God turned His back upon you. That is how it was. You have kept back the blessing from God. The windows were ready and His hands were upon them, and He said, 'Now prove Me, clear away the imagery and I will open the windows of heaven.' Give back those arrears; work them off. The more you give the more you will have, and the day will come when all you have will be just what you have given. Do n't, O do n't fret, my soul, by telling me you must do this, and you must do that. The first and great commandment of the law is, 'Thou shalt love with all thine heart.'"

—Dr. Joseph Parker.

## THE REWARD FOR GIVING.

"THERE is nothing I fear but that I may not know my whole duty, or knowing may not perform it." These words are attributed to Mary Lyon. Truly the great concern of every Christian ought to be to know his duty, and to perform it. No higher motive can be set before us, than to perform our duty toward God and toward our fellow-men from love to Him and desire to do right. Nevertheless God has graciously ordained that rewards shall follow well doing. Every duty performed brings its recompense. Giving is no exception to this rule. We are admonished to give freely, "Freely ye have received, freely give;" and cheerfully, "not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a

cheerful giver;" and to those from whom we can expect no return, "Give to the poor," "Give to him that needeth." Yet when we give in this spirit a blessing is promised us in return. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Christ taught us that our gifts to others in His name are reckoned as unto Himself, and the smallest of such deeds shall not lose its reward.

But not only blessedness in heaven, but blessedness here and now, is the reward of giving. There is a subtle joy in self-sacrifice that is deeper and sweeter than any other.

"There is a joy in doing good
The selfish never know;
A draught so rich, so pure, so rare,
It sets the heart aglow."

The people who are asking, "Is life worth living?" are not the ones who are denying themselves in the service of others; not the philanthropic poor nor the

philanthropic rich; such are proving the blessedness of life when it is unselfishly devoted to the good of others.

It was a favorite saying of Marcus Aurelius, the heathen philosopher, that "an unshared blessing can not be enjoyed." This is true. And in this fact is seen the reason why an illiberal man is miserable. Made for love and liberty and light, he is in bondage to selfishness and ingratitude, and is shut out from that which gives the highest pleasure, the keenest joy. There is a reflex influence from giving that is blessed in its effects on our hearts and lives. Every selfish act increases the spirit of selfishness within us, but every self-denial, every act of generosity, every unselfish gift rebukes and lessens that spirit within us.

In one of the reports of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society occur these words: "Forty girls in Christian Oregon are educating and Christianizing one heathen girl in India; and one heathen girl in India is elevating, purifying, refining,

and fitting for spheres of Christian usefulness forty girls in Oregon."

Our actions are like the water playing in the fountain, thrown up by some unseen force, only to fall back in sparkling drops, rippling again the quiet waters below. So our deeds, if good and noble, bring back into the current of our lives, all sparkling and bright with God's smile and benediction, His own joy and peace.

"The tissues of our life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.

We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade."

There is a law of our nature that the only way to retain our blessings is to use them, to give them out. Saved souls must freely communicate what they have received. They must go to their own homes and show what God has done for them. The more we become absorbed in the inter-

ests of others, the more we increase our own spiritual joy and strength. It is upon this principle that the Bible teaches us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. It is God's law of the universe. As we have received, so let us freely give.

There is an old parable of the man who had a pond of water on his land. He was always hoarding water, turning every little ditch into his pond, setting tubs and buckets under every eve and spout, and carrying water to put into it. He envied even the birds what they drank, fearing lest some day the pond would be dry and he would perish of thirst. But coming one day with an unusually heavy load of water he slipped and fell into his pond and was drowned. There are many men who are hoarding and pouring into the pond of their material wealth, who at last will be overwhelmed in its waters. It is not the pond which never gives, but the stream which does nothing but give, and looks as if it would soon run itself away, that is

constantly replenished and is kept pure, sparkling, and bright.

"See the rivers flowing
Downward to the sea,
Pouring all their treasures
Bountiful and free;
Yet to help their giving,
Hidden springs arise;
Or if need be, showers
Feed them from the skies."
—Adelaide Anne Procter.

There is no doubt but liberality stimulates all the better feelings and nobler qualities. It has been said that a revival of religion produces a spirit of liberality. To some extent that is true. But it is also true that liberal giving will promote a revival. A pastor after telling of the remarkable awakening of a poor widow to the duty and privilege of giving, and how from her poverty she saved a penny at a time till her offerings amounted to twenty-one dollars and eighty-five cents in a year, remarked that she apparently grew more in Christian character that year than in all the previous years of her connection with

the Church. A return to the Bible method and measure of giving would, without doubt, produce a glorious spiritual revival.

Then, in addition to these spiritual blessings, God promises material blessings to those who give liberally. The familiar passage in the third chapter of Malachi, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it," is often quoted as if it referred to spiritual things alone. While it may be interpreted as covering them, for the principle doubtless holds good there also, yet it refers primarily to the literal bringing in of the tithes, and to temporal blessings and prosperity. For it is added: "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before her time in the field,

saith the Lord of hosts." They had neglected the tithes, and the priests, having no support, had abandoned the temple, and its services had ceased or were greatly interrupted, and the Lord had visited them with plagues and disasters. This passage is a promise that if they will bring in the tithes and re-establish the worship, he will visit them again with temporal prosperity.

Much the same state of affairs existed in the time of Haggai. After their return from captivity they were very poor, but their circumstances had begun to improve somewhat, and they built them good houses, but let the temple lie in ruins. God punished them by sending drought, and giving them meager crops, and by the mouth of the prophet reminded them, "Ye have sown much and bring little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to be put into a

bag with holes. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home I did blow upon it (or did blow it away). Why? saith the Lord of hosts. *Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man into your own house.*"

He assures them that it is for this reason that their crops have failed and their labor been in vain, and that from the very day that they begin to lay the foundation of the temple, from that day He will bless them with prosperity.

That there is a connection between tithing and business prosperity is taught in these words: "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

Prosperity is connected with the keeping of the law, including the law of the

tithe, in those most interesting and beautiful chapters in Deuteronomy, the twenty-sixth to the twenty-eighth. The Israelite is there commanded when he has come into the land flowing with milk and honey, which the Lord has promised him, to bring the firstfruits of the ground and the firstlings of the flock and "the tithe of all his increase," and offer them to the Lord, with joy and with thanksgiving. A long list of blessings are then named and promised him on condition that he keep these commandments and others given at the same time. He is also warned that if he does not keep these commandments, curses will rest upon all his affairs.

Not only in the Old Testament is this doctrine taught, but also in the New. "Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be meas-

ured to you again," is as explicit as anything in the Old Testament.

We do not say that the Bible teaches that every one who gives liberally will be rich. There are many to whom riches would not be a blessing. Some of the most saintly are very poor, but they have not been made poorer than they otherwise would be just because they have obeyed God's law of giving. There is no inconsistency in the theory which declares that it is a general law of God's kingdom to give temporal blessings to them who honor Him with their substance, and which yet allows that for sufficient reasons He permits some of His saints to be very poor.

Nor do we wish to place undue emphasis upon this matter of material rewards. Any one who would give simply for the purpose of gain, in hope that God would make him rich, would be astray in the spirit of his gifts, and would most likely fail to realize his wish. In the very nature

of the case one's gifts would not be acceptable to God when offered in this selfish spirit. We do not need to dwell particularly upon *any* of the rewards, and yet while we strive to give from the highest possible motives, the other and lower ones need not be entirely lost sight of. God has promised them, and what God declares in His Word we need not hesitate to proclaim. When we obey He will bless, and our lives long will prove

"No act of good can e'er be lost
Or fail of its reward;
They who to others give the most
Shall have the most from God."

# V.

# THE TITHE IS THE LORD'S.

Human nature can not be trusted to carry out its generous impulses. If I should succeed in winding any of you up to the determination to do generous things, you would run down again before next Sunday, unless your resolution were fastened by a ratchet. That is what a solemn pledge to pay money to God amounts to—a ratchet to hold us up to the pitch we have reached. —Dr. A. J. Gordon.

If you want to learn to be a cheerful giver, you can begin by being a systematic one.

Choose that which is best, and custom will make it most agreeable. —J. W. Scott.

One-tenth of ripened grain
  One-tenth of tree and vine,
One-tenth of all the yield
  From ten-tenths' rain and shine.

One-tenth of lowing herds
  That browse on hill and plain,
One-tenth of bleating flocks
  For ten-tenths' shine and rain.

One-tenth of all increase
  From counting-room and mart,
One-tenth that science yields,
  One-tenth of every art.

One-tenth of loom and press,
  One-tenth of mill and mine,
One-tenth of every craft
  Wrought out by gifts of Thine.

One-tenth of glowing words
  That glowing dollars hold.
One-tenth of written thoughts
  That turn to shining gold.

One-tenth! and dost Thou, Lord,
  But ask this meager loan,
When all the earth is Thine,
  And all we have Thine own?
—The Churchman.

## THE TITHE IS THE LORD'S.

THE manner of giving should be according to some fixed rule or principle, some method, and not be the result of chance or mood. In business circles system is continually magnified. We are told that no man can expect success in business without it. In cases of bankruptcy it has usually been found that the business had been carried on without system and the books were in a muddle.

We are told of the vast amounts of labor certain men have been able to perform because of their systematic procedure. But while in all business and professional circles method has been deemed indispensable, the matter of our account with the Lord's treasury has been treated by many as if it was thought unworthy of any such care or system.

There is no better or more equable method than that prescribed in the Bible, proportionate giving; that is, giving a fixed proportion or per cent of one's income. This is the rule recommended by Paul in raising supplies for the relief of the poor Christians at Jerusalem, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

In the Old Testament the per cent required is stated; namely, a tenth. The specific law of the tenth, or tithe, was given to the Israelites through Moses at the time of the exodus from Egypt and the entering into the promised land. It belongs to that list of enactments known as the Mosaic Law. It is found in Leviticus xxvii, 30-32, and Numbers xviii, 20-26. It provides that one-tenth of all their increase of fruit, grain, flocks, herds, everything, should be given to the Lord. This was to be used to support the priests, who received no inheritance of land with

the rest of the people. When the Levites received this tithe they were to offer again one-tenth of it to the Lord as a heave offering.

The different references to the tithe are not very clear, but it is generally believed that there was a second tithe, which for two years out of every three was to furnish supplies for the sacred festivals, and the third year was devoted to the poor.[1]

In addition to this tenth or two-tenths, whichever it was, there was a tax of half a shekel, about twenty-five cents of our money, laid upon every male twenty years old and upward. This was used in maintaining the tabernacle, and later the temple, service. There were also free-will offerings to be given. "Whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it an offering to the Lord."[2]

There was then among the Jews the tithe for the support of the priesthood, a second

[1]Deuteronomy xiv, 22-29.
[2]Exodus xxxv, 4-10.

tithe for furnishing the materials for the sacred festivals and for general distribution among the poor, a tax of half a shekel upon each adult male, besides free-will offerings, and the commandment to leave the gleanings in the field, vineyard, and orchard for the poor.

Altogether the Jew, though confined to a narrow sphere, living a simple pastoral life, and knowing nothing of missionary enterprise and nothing of such a complex and strenuous life as we live to-day, with all its new duties, dangers, and demands, was called upon to devote no inconsiderable part of his income to religious and charitable purposes. And when the laws with respect to giving were obeyed there was always abundance for his needs. When that first collection of half shekels was taken in the wilderness for the building and furnishing of the tabernacle, there was brought in amidst rejoicing a sum fully equal in these times to two and a quarter million dollars. When at the com-

mandment of Joash this tax was collected for the repair of the temple, they filled again and again with coin a chest so large that it required two men to carry it, and "gathered money in abundance." When the repairs were completed, they made of that which was left gold and silver vessels and spoons for the temple service.

The same abundance would result to-day did we follow the same or similar rules; and this we firmly believe to be our duty.

It will be asked, "Is the law of the tithe binding to-day? Was it not abolished with the rest of the Mosaic law?" So far as the Levitical enactment was concerned, yes, *it* was abolished. That the tithe should be gathered and applied as directed in this law is no longer binding. *That* with the rest of the Mosaic law is repealed. But right here is a point often overlooked. THE MORAL LAW OF THE TITHE EXISTED CENTURIES BEFORE THE MOSAIC ENACTMENT, AND THIS MORAL LAW HAS NEVER

BEEN REPEALED. The Mosaic law only confirmed what already existed, and gave specific directions what to do with the tithe. It was declared, "The tithe is the Lord's," and then it was enacted that it should be applied to the support of the priests. The Mosaic enactment is no longer binding, but the greater moral law that existed long before has not been repealed. The fact that the tithe is the Lord's remains forever.

The following facts may be mentioned in support of the statement that the law of the tithe existed long before Moses:

Abraham, more than four hundred years before Moses, gave tithes to Melchisedek, priest of the most high God, as an offering unto the Lord.[3] Adam Clarke, commenting on this, says: "Almost all nations of the earth have agreed in giving a tenth part of their property to be employed in religious uses. The tithes were afterward granted to the Levites for the use of the

[3]Genesis xiv, 20.

sanctuary and the maintenance of themselves and their families, as they had no other inheritance in Israel."

Two generations later when Jacob slept at Bethel and had a vision of heaven, he arose in the morning and worshiped God and vowed that if God would prosper and bless him, "Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."[4] Whedon's Commentary on this passage has the following remark: "It is noticeable how in this case, as in that of Abraham, the tithe of all is specified as the proper portion of one's increase to be consecrated to God. It is mentioned not as a new strange thing, but in such an incidental way as to imply that even in Abraham's and Jacob's day the custom was one of long previous standing. Thus early it would seem God had in some way revealed to man His claim to the tenth part of his gains."

Not only the Hebrews, but the Phe-

[4]Genesis xxviii, 18-22.

nicians, Carthaginians, Lydians, Romans, and Greeks gave tithes to their gods.[5]

The Arabians, Saxons, Ethiopians, and other nations observed the same practice, and Montacutius says that "instances are mentioned in history of some nations who did not offer sacrifices, but in the annals of all time none are found who did not pay tithes.[6] It is true that we have no account of the giving of this law, but it must in some way very early have been revealed to man.

The fact that traditions of a universal flood are found among every important race except only one, is claimed as evidence that the tradition must have originated in some well-defined event before the dispersion of mankind.[7] In like manner the practice of tithing among all nations of antiquity, is evidence that away back before Abraham, before the dispersion, there

[5]Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia. Article, "Tithes."
[6]What We Owe and How to Pay It. Kane.
[7]Beginnings of History. Lenormant. Page 382.

must have been some commandment or some revelation that this was the will of God. This commandment or revelation has never been repealed or withdrawn. Whatever of moral worth or authority there was in it then there is in it to-day. God "is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Humanity changes not. Our needs are the same as ever, and our blessings as compared with ancient times have amazingly increased. If the Jews owed a tenth surely our debt can not be any less, but rather more. Even if any one should believe the tithe abolished, certainly no Christian would affirm that in abolishing it a lower standard was set. We affirm, therefore, that it is binding upon us to give as much at least as a tenth of our income to the Lord.

But there are still other reasons for this conclusion. Let us turn for a moment to the New Testament and to the early Christian Church. It is said that the New Testament does not renew the command to

tithe, and it is true that it does not explicitly state this as a Christian duty; but yet Jesus incidentally commends it in these words: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."[8] It is also true that the law of the Sabbath was not repeated in the New Testament, but Jesus in His declaration, "The Sabbath was made for man," indicates its usefulness, and we feel ourselves bound to keep it. They are two laws that find the reason for their existence in the nature of man and his relation to the Creator, and they will endure while this nature and these relations remain unchanged.

We need not wonder that in the letters of the apostles to the various individuals and Churches there is no command to tithe,

[8]Matthew xxiii, 23.

when we remember that many of them probably were giving much more than that, and that thousands of them sold all they had, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. When men were giving their time, their fortunes, and their lives for the kingdom of heaven's sake, there was no reason for exhorting them to do the lesser things, for they were included in the larger things they were already doing.

Paul did on one occasion, when directing the Corinthians to take a collection for the poor of Jerusalem, say: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."[9] He did not specify the particular proportion that they should give to this particular charity, but his suggestion, "as God has prospered you," is in reality the proportionate method.

We do not know just how long the voluntary offerings sufficed for the wants of the

[9] 1 Cor. xvi, 2.

Church, but within a few generations they had settled down to the practice of tithing.

The Apostolic Constitutions, written probably in the latter part of the second century or the first part of the third century, are evidence that tithing was then practiced. "Let him use those tenths and firstfruits, which are given according to the command of God, as a man of God; as also let him dispense in a right manner the free-will offerings which are brought in on account of the poor."[10] "Let all firstfruits be brought to the bishop, and to the presbyters, and to the deacons for their maintenance, but let all the tithe be for the maintenance of the rest of the clergy, and of the virgins and widows, and of those under the trial of poverty."[11]

Irenæus, the disciple of that Polycarp who was the friend of the apostle John, says: "We ought to offer to God the firstfruits of His creatures. As Moses says,

[10]Apostolic Constitutions, Book II, Sec. iv, Par. xxv.
[11]Apostolic Constitutions, Book VIII, Sec. iv, Par. xxv.

Thou shalt not appear before the Lord empty. Christ came not to diminish, but to increase our obligation."[12]

Cyprian, a man of wealth who had given most of his fortune to the poor, and who a little more than two hundred years after Pentecost was bishop of Carthage, says: "Now we do not even give tithes of our patrimony, and when God commands us to sell we purchase and amass."

Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed orator, says: "O what a shame that what was no great matter among the Jews should be pretended to be such among Christians! If there was danger then in omitting tithes, how much greater must be the danger now!"

St. Ambrose, the saintly bishop of the fourth century, who, though a rich and noble Roman, at the outset of his min-

[12]This and the following are quoted from Kane's tract, "What We Owe and How to Pay It." He also gives a list of eight general councils between A. D. 314 and 1425 that legislated concerning the tithe. See also McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia on Tithes.

istry devoted his whole fortune to the Church, says: "The Lord commands our tithe to be paid every year. He hath given you nine parts, but He has reserved the tenth part to Himself."

Augustine, one of the greatest of all theologians, says: "Tithes ought to be paid from whatever may be your occupation. Tithes are required as a debt. He who would procure either pardon or reward, let him pay tithes, and out of the nine parts give alms."

In the latter part of the eighth century tithing was introduced into England. In later times the English law required every one to pay tithes to the Church of England, and as this wrought hardship to those who were members of Dissenting Churches which they supported with their voluntary offerings, the law became obnoxious to many, though in some form it has continued to the present day.

The argument that it is the Christian's

duty to pay a tenth to the Lord may then be summed up as follows:

1. This was a custom among the ancient Hebrews and many other ancient nations. It must have been based on some revelation or command.

2. It was not abolished with the Mosaic law any more than was the law of the Sabbath, for both these existed previously to and were independent of the Mosaic law.

3. There is no knowledge of its *ever* having been abolished.

4. Even if the written law had been repealed, the natural obligation would stand. By virtue of our blessings we owe at least as much as the ancients. Even if it had been repealed, it is not to be supposed that a lower standard would have been set in its stead.

5. Christ commended tithing.

6. The early Church through many centuries commended and practiced tithing.

If, after all, it be said we have not dem-

onstrated by any positive command the present duty of tithing, we reply, it is not necessary so to demonstrate it to show moral obligation. Mr. Gladstone says: "To constitute a moral obligation it is not necessary that we have a positive command. Probable evidence is binding as well as demonstrative evidence; nay, it constitutes the greatest portion of the subject matter of duty."

If the evidence we have presented may seem to any not absolutely conclusive, surely none will question that it is probable, and it constitutes, therefore, according to Mr. Gladstone, a moral obligation.

But we are sure that multitudes of devout Christians who love the Lord supremely will have little interest in the matter of proof; their love outruns these arguments and they have long ago made up their minds that they can not for love's sake ever give less than a tenth.

# VI.

# QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS.

"Give as you would if an angel
Awaited your gift at the door;
Give as you would if to-morrow
Found you where waiting is o'er.
Give as you would to the Master,
If you met His searching look;
Give as you would of your substance
If His hand the offering took."

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." —Jesus.

"Knowing ones can estimate character by looking into the collection basket." —C. E. Robinson.

"The man may last but never lives,
Who much receives but nothing gives;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank."

## QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS

WHAT is the tenth of my income? It may be comparatively easy for some persons to determine this, but difficult for others. It is clear that it should be the tenth of the *net* income. Personal and family expenses should not be deducted, but only business expenses should be taken out before tithing. A man on a salary ordinarily has no business expenses, and his entire income should be tithed. The same is true of those who work for wages, but street-car fare or cost of tools and so forth may properly be deducted before tithing. The clergyman may deduct the cost of keeping a horse, when that is necessary, and the lawyer his office rent. The farmer's net income is the money received

from the sale of farm products, the fair cash value of what the family consumes, together with anything he may otherwise have gained, less taxes on his farm, the cost of hired labor, farm implements, and repairs. The merchant should deduct clerk hire, rental of storeroom, or taxes on it if he owns it, and any other legitimate business expenses before tithing.

A little thought will enable any one to determine at least approximately what is his net income. Many little questions must be left to the individual conscience.

Should one ever give more than the tenth? Yes, undoubtedly. This much is every one's duty; all owe this much. But gifts, free-will offerings in addition to this may be offered, and undoubtedly ought to be given by many. The tenth is the minimum. Very many should give more than this, some a half, some perhaps nine-tenths. Suppose one has a capital that produces one hundred thousand dollars a year income. He is not engaged in a business that

needs further capital; he needs to accumulate no more for his own or his family's needs, and could live in luxury, and yet give nine-tenths of his income to the cause of God to his own great profit as well as to the blessing of the world.

John Wesley, when his income was thirty pounds, lived on twenty-eight and gave away two. When his income increased to sixty, and later to one hundred and twenty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight and gave away the remainder. Many to-day are so situated that they ought to do the same. We may add to the tenth in free-will offerings as God prospers us and gives us to see our duty.

To what objects should the tithe be given?

First of all, to your home Church—the support of the ministry, building and keeping in repair the church edifice, and all current expenses of the Church. Also to the relief of the destitute and care of the sick, and to the evangelization of the world

through various agencies, as one's own judgment and conscience may direct. The making of gifts to one's own friends or relatives should not be from the tithe unless the persons be objects of charity and our gifts are for their relief.

When should I begin to tithe? Now, if you have any income; if not, then just as soon as you begin to earn. Not long ago Mr. John D. Rockefeller, "the richest man in the world," told the Church in which his career has been run the story of his small beginnings. *The Christian Life* relates it as follows: "I had canvassed Cleveland industriously to secure employment. I had completed my studies and was trying to find something to do. I had been unsuccessful. As good fortune would have it, I went down to the dock and made one more application, and was told that if I would come in after dinner they would see whether I could come to work for them. I went down after dinner and got the position, and I thus was permitted to remain

in the city, permitted to remain in the Church, and with me that was the beginning." Mr. Rockefeller told how when he was getting in a prosperous way—earning sixteen dollars a month—he began at once to try to put his shoulder under the Church debt, and help in other directions. He quoted some of the items: Mite Society, ten cents; slip rent, one dollar; Sabbath-school, five cents; present for superintendent, twenty-five cents; Five Points Mission, New York, twelve cents; *The Macedonian,* a little religious paper, ten cents; present to teacher, twenty-five cents; poor in the Church, ten cents; Young Men's Christian Association, one dollar.

These things were more to Mr. Rockefeller then than giving eleven million dollars to the University of Chicago is now. They moved him to say: "I want the boys and girls in this Church, or in any Church, to remember if they are ever going to give away money they must begin to-day, and

do what they can to-day, and we will be sure of them to-morrow. This is the secret of generosity. Do n't wait until you are rich. Begin giving to-day. If you can't give a million dollars, give ten cents. If you do n't give the ten cents now, you will not feel that you can afford to give the millions dollars when you have it."

A Chicago business man, talking with a friend on the subject of giving, said: "Yes, I determined when I was a clerk, the first year that I earned anything for myself, that I would set aside a certain fixed percentage of my income for benevolences. I made the resolution, and I have kept it."

"Well, you began early," his friend remarked.

"So I did," was the reply, "and it was well I did. My salary was small, and to give the proportion I fixed upon was hard, but there has never been a year since when it would not have been harder. A year or two afterward I went into business for myself, and it looked as if every cent was

needed for capital. Then the year after that I was married. Soon after that came the big fire; then hard times, the epizootic; in fact, almost every year there has been something to make that particular year a bad one in which to begin. Now I always say to my friends, 'Begin to give as soon as you begin to make; start early.' "

Would you recommend proportionate giving, even if a smaller per cent were adopted? By all means. The writer began by giving six per cent. Some of his friends said, "That is too much; you can not afford it." But it was so satisfactory that in a little more than two years he changed it to ten per cent, and has continued that for eleven years. Proportionate giving is a blessing to the giver. It makes giving easy, a real delight, leads to a more systematic conduct of one's affairs, and in every way is an advantage to him and to the causes he supports. Very few, however, having adopted proportionate giving will be long content to give less

than a tenth. Let those who desire to be liberal and to give systematically, by all means begin to give proportionately, whatever proportion they may fix upon; but, best of all, resolve to give not less than a tenth.

Many difficulties arise in the minds of people, and various objections present themselves. One says: "I am in debt; should I not first pay my debt?"

Is there any debt more sacred than that we owe the Lord? A very great many people are in debt some way or other. Wealthy people are very often in debt, but of course have property to offset their debts. If a mechanic buys a home for two thousand dollars, and has to go in debt one thousand dollars on it, that simply means that he owns half a home, and is not poorer than if he owned none of it and were not in debt.

If one's debt has been contracted in securing an education, that education is his

capital, and he is not poorer than if he had no education and no debt.

Even if he was forced into debt by sickness or misfortune, yet he may as surely, and perhaps even as quickly, discharge his obligations while honoring the Lord with the tithe, for God has promised His blessing on those who so honor Him.

"My income is small, barely sufficient for a living, and I can not afford to give so much."

Rather you can not afford *not* to do it. We condemn railroad companies for making a specialty of Sunday trains and excursions, and other corporations for operating needlessly on the Sabbath for financial gain. We admit that it may be a financial loss for them to give up these things, but claim nevertheless that they should respect the law of the Sabbath. Are we willing, then, to apply the logic to our own actions? Will we place the law of temporal prosperity above the law of

right? We should obey the law of giving as scrupulously as the law of the Sabbath, even though we should be poorer at the end of the year by the exact amount we give. When one man refused to put anything in the collection-basket because he was too poor, "Then," said the deacon, "take some out; this collection is for the poor." When we are too poor to give, we are at the point where we must begin to receive charity. We would not say to a poor man, "You are too poor to lose one day in seven; work on the Sabbath." Rather we would tell him to observe the law at whatever sacrifice to himself, and leave the result with God. And so should we do with respect to the matter of giving.

Recall the promises of blessing which God has made to those who give:

"Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then

shall thy light arise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

"Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

"Let us put it another way. Which farmer is under the greater obligation to put in a plentiful crop, the poor man or the rich man? The Bible distinctly compares giving to sowing, and says, 'He that

soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.' The apostle Paul uses this in strict reference to money. He tells the Corinthians that God will bless them with money in proportion as they give money to His cause; he urges them to give liberally and cheerfully, and backs up his exhortations by saying, 'And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.'

"Is it not astonishing how blind hosts of Christians are when they read the Bible? These rich promises of material prosperity are either not noticed, or when they are, they are very rarely taken in their plain and obvious sense, as God states them. Some forced and generally figurative or spiritual interpretation is put upon them, and poor Christian men who will loan their money to a bank and sleep in perfect assurance of getting it when they need it, worry themselves beyond measure

for fear they may give too much to God's cause, and may ultimately come to want in spite of the many strong and explicit declarations of the Bible that the way to get is to give.

"Reasoning without experience, it seems a very foolish thing for a farmer to take the little grain which he may have left, and during seed-time deliberately throw that grain away, handful after handful. Particularly would this be so if he had not enough grain to provide bread for his family during the year. If a stranger who had no experience in the laws of vegetation and growth were to come to this earth, he would surely say that the man was very foolish thus deliberately to throw away the bread which he needed for his family. And yet if he would stay until the harvest, he would learn that the grain thus sown had increased, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold, and that it was the highest wisdom that prompted that farmer to throw away the little grain he had; for

by giving he got, while if he had kept it he would have lost the little which he had."[1]

In reply to those who think the tenth is too great a proportion for the average person to pay, it may further be said that a very large number of such persons easily spend a considerable amount for unnecessary things, and in some cases even harmful things.

War costs annually in the United States seventy-two cents per capita; in France, two dollars and twenty cents; and in Germany, two dollars and seventy cents per capita. In the United States about one billion four hundred million dollars is annually spent for liquor, and five hundred and thirty millions for tobacco, while flour costs three hundred and seventy millions, and one hundred and fifty millions is spent on the Churches and five millions for foreign missions. It is not to be supposed that *Christian* people spend any considerable amount of that which goes for liquor,

[1]The Path to Wealth, pp. 80-84.

nor any large amount even of that which goes for tobacco, but *poor* people do furnish a very large proportion of it, and it goes to show that in general people will find some way of getting money for what they want. If people in poor and moderate circumstances spend so much for "that which is not bread, and for that which satisfieth not," if men so readily give for pleasure or for the gratification of appetite, we should not count it a burden that we are asked to return to the great Giver a tithe of what He has bestowed upon us.

But again, some object that this is such a formal, legal way of looking at the subject. Will it not have a tendency to rob our giving of its sympathy and heartiness? By no means. It has rather the opposite effect, and the people who set the tenth as the minimum of their gifts are among the most cheerful of givers, the most interested in the causes they assist, and, when their means are large, become the most lavish givers. Mr. Beecher once described the

different kinds of givers as follows: "Some men give so that you are angry every time you ask them to contribute. They give so that their gold and silver shoot you like a bullet. Other persons give with such beauty that you remember it as long as you live, and you say, 'It is a pleasure to go to such men.' There are some men who give as springs do; whether you go to them or not they are always full, and your part is only to put your dish under the ever-flowing stream. Others give just as a pump does when the well is dry and the pump leaks."

No one who tithes gives like the leaky pump in a dry well, but more like the perennial spring. When a cause is presented to him there is no debating with himself, no selfish spirit rising within him to oppose his giving; a part of his money is consecrated to God, and it is a pleasure to give it, and the only question to settle is how much is to go to this particular cause.

"But you emphasize the giving of ma-

terial things to a degree that will obscure the duty of other offerings."

It is true that these chapters treat of material offerings, stewardship; but not with the intention of obscuring or minifying other and still more valuable gifts. As time, sympathy, love, life are higher than money, so the giving of them is proportionately more important. The first and greatest thing is the giving of ourselves. Said a young man, "Put the collection-basket a little lower; I want to step in myself." On such consecration we insist with all our heart.

Other questions may arise, but with the principles fixed in mind each can determine the answer for himself. Doubtless other objections might also be suggested, but we believe there are none but can be answered to the satisfaction of all earnest inquirers.

# VII.

# TESTIMONY AND EXAMPLE.

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## GIVE ME NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES.

Christians will never give as they ought until they begin to keep two purses, one for their own necessary expenses, and one for the Lord's work, from the latter of which they would no more draw for their own use than they would purloin from their neighbor's pocket.

—A. J. Gordon.

## TESTIMONY AND EXAMPLE.

Mr. Spurgeon in youth adopted the principle of giving a tenth to God. When he won a prize for an essay on a religious subject he felt that he could not give less than one-fifth of it. And he never after that was content with giving less than one-fifth.

Professor Max Müller, one of England's greatest scholars, writing to a minister, speaks thus concerning the duty of tithing:[1] "It is surprising that when there is so much profession of religious sincerity, a special society should be organized to impress upon the people the duty of giving to benevolence a tenth part of their income. Can there be a lower and a simpler test

[1] What We Owe and How to Pay It.

of that sincerity? And yet when we think what this world would be if at least this minimum of Christianity were a reality, one feels that you are right in preaching this simple duty in season and out of season, until people see that without fulfilling it every other profession of religion is a mere sham. I can hardly trust myself to think what the result would be if it were considered not respectable to give less than one-tenth. You will not rest till the giving of one-tenth of one's income becomes the general fashion, so that a young man at Oxford would as soon think of walking down High Street without his hat on as profess to be a Christian and not fulfill so humble a part of his duty."

Mrs. Addie Lovewell, M. D., Los Angeles, says: "For years my husband and I have been in the habit of taking one-tenth of our income for the Lord's work, and then giving thank-offerings and free-will offerings besides. Of these latter we kept no account, but I believe the Lord has,

and some way compound interest comes back to us from the bank of heaven. I would not be deprived of this privilege. What a sweetness has come into my life! I know of no way of giving to please the Lord except the Bible standard."

The Rev. Dr. C. B. Henthorne says: "I began tithing my income in 1880, and have continued until the present. Results: It has vastly increased the joy of giving. It has systematized my finances so that the nine-tenths are spent to a better advantage. It has brought the security of being in covenant relations with God."

Mrs. Sarah De La Fetra, Washington, D. C., says: "A few years ago, after a financial crisis, we found ourselves several thousand dollars in debt and daily interest accruing, causing care and anxiety, over which we prayed much. Reorganizing our business, we recognized God's copartnership with us, His claim upon our lives. Could we justly rob God of His share of our income, thus dishonoring Him while

we discharged the duty of faithfully paying every other dollar of indebtedness, whether it be of misfortune or mismanagement? O, no; so, verily trusting Him, after doing our utmost ourselves we cheerfully and religiously paid our vows, and so exceeding great has been His blessing and approval that every wearying note and obligation has been met, and abundant spiritual life and joy have been the fruitage of this faithfulness. We forget that Omnipotence has servants everywhere, and that even the winds and the sea obey Him. 'Our times are in His hands,' and He is able 'to make all grace abound toward you,' so that 'you shall have all sufficiency in all things.'"

In speaking of the necessity of teaching children this duty, she says: "I have seen one who in early childhood gave one-tenth of a weekly salary (one dollar and a half a week)—fifteen cents each Sunday—into the treasury of the Sunday-school for missions, and who afterward gave a tenth of

twenty, twenty-five, and fifty dollars a month, each time confessing the joy it was to give. Years have crowned and crowded this young life with blessing, until now in early manhood ten per cent of three hundred or four hundred dollars a month is the acknowledged share due the great Giver. And, best of all, the spiritual life has been unfolded and expanded until the Christ likeness is clearly manifest to all who come in contact with this abundant life."[2]

Dr. Isaac Crook says: "From 1894 to 1897 the great corn belt, including Kansas and Nebraska, was visited by a drought rivaling, if not surpassing, the three years and six months in the reign of Ahab. . . . Under a burning sky and parched earth little was left over most of the immense prairies but barbed-wire fences and bony cattle. Men's hearts failed on all hands as fortune and hope fled. Thou-

[2]Christian Advocate, New York, 1900, p. 1044.

sands moved 'back East,' and multitudes drove they knew not whither. Such was Western Kansas in 1894.

"Mrs. E. M. Dodson, seventy years of age, a widow, and most of the time a shut-in, real estate and bank stock gone, unable to get word from Eastern friends, and with no means of support but her needle, arranged to go for refuge to a home in Council Bluffs, Iowa. In this thoroughly humiliated condition there came to her mind the darker case of womankind in India. She cried to God for light as to what she should do. It was burned into her heart before she received one ray of light. Then, as if a voice, it came;—'Finish the quilt on hand; sell it and send the proceeds to Phebe Ward in India.' It was done. Then sprang up a desire to make one for Africa and one for Japan. 'But,' thought she, 'I have no materials.' Then she advertised for quilt pieces. They came, and have never ceased coming till now. This was better than dependence in

a Home for the Aged. Her needle keeps bright, her faith brighter. She has given nearly four hundred dollars for home and foreign missions. One by one she has adopted and supports Mary Leach, a missionary in Peshawar, a girl in Calcutta, two Indian famine orphans, a Bible-woman in Foochow, and last, a native preacher in Foochow District,—a family of six, whose spiritual children are rapidly multiplying into hundreds; this family sustained by a lone widow of seventy-six, who had intended to retreat into a refuge for the aged and homeless. She says: 'I literally give all I earn by my needle, and then look to God to move hearts to give to me for missions. I have not one care about my needs, and almost daily my heart melts before God for His blessings bestowed.' "

Mr. John Baldwin was the founder of Baldwin University, Berea, Ohio, and of seminaries in Louisiana and Kansas. He began his business career on a farm among the forests of Northern Ohio early in the

lest century, a poor man. The foundation of the fortune that enabled him to do so much for education was in the grindstone quarry on his farm. It is said that one day at prayer in a secluded spot on his farm he told the Lord that if He would give him prosperity he would give to Him one-tenth of his income and as much more as he could spare from his business. When he rose from his knees he noticed the rock jutting out over a little stream, and examining it discovered it was suitable for grindstones.[3]

Bishop McCabe received a letter from the pastor of one of our Churches in Ohio, in which he says: "Our Church here has adopted the tithing plan for the raising of its finances, and already it is working wonders in our Church. Hitherto we have been largely dependent on the other Methodist Churches of our city, and what money

[3]Christian Advocate, New York, article by Rev. Wm. M. Osborne, July 12, 1900; and an article by D. W. Couch, 1900, p. 1451.

we could not beg from them we raised by entertainments, lectures, and concerts. Very little came into the treasury from the pockets of our own members. But during the last two years we have made a marked improvement along this line, and this year we have solved the problem forever, we think, by adopting God's plan. We now have about thirty tithers, and our income from these alone is sufficient to meet all our expenses. Last month, for the first time in our history, we closed up our accounts and had a balance in our treasury. Thirty tithers are paying into the Church more than one hundred and thirty subscription members."

Robert Hamilton, a Canadian lumber merchant, was noted during his life for his liberal charities, and at the time of his death his estate was valued at $2,750,000. About $275,000 of this was bequeathed to various charitable objects, the remainder going to his relatives. He himself was a tither, and as a result of his experience

he advises all benefiting by his will to give at least one-tenth of their total income every year to the Lord.

Dr. Buckley, in an editorial concerning Mr. Hamilton and his advice to his heirs, says: "In the early period of life to do it would require frugality and economy;—frugality, which signifies limited expenditures; economy, which signifies the wise use of them. To give but one-tenth when one by getting and saving has accumulated a large amount, would react unfavorably upon the moral nature, and leave such an amount as would probably develop either a miserliness, which would refuse to give the tenth, or a habit of luxurious indulgence.

"One-tenth as a minimum; more as the Lord prospers. Some argue for no fixed minimum. Divine wisdom selected a tenth under the plan of the Old Testament dispensation. Under the New the more definite statement is as the Lord hath prospered you. But such is human nature that

the standard can only be applied by a person of the very highest intellectual and equally exalted spiritual gifts and attainments. Self-love can easily interpret prosperity so as to justify the retaining of a very large part of one's income. A minimum fixed by Scripture analogy would determine without painful perplexity a settled contribution to the Lord's cause. It would also cause an economy in times of stress, to set apart a tenth, which would frequently remove the cause."[4]

[4]Christian Advocate, New York, Jan. 5, 1899, p. 6.

# VIII.

# APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

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God is always giving. God loves to give,—always gives His best gifts; and those who give, and give their best gifts because they love to give, are, so far, like God. Where there is little love for giving, there is very little likeness to God.

—Rev. C. E. B. Hallam, in "Path to Wealth."

Give, as the morning that flows out of heaven;
Give, as the waves when the channel is riven;
Give, as the free air and sunshine are given;
Lavishly, utterly, carelessly give.
Not the waste drops of the cup overflowing,
Not the faint sparks of thy hearth ever glowing,
Not a pale bud from the June rose's blowing;
Give as He gave thee who gave thee to live.

Pour out thy love like the rush of a river
Wasting its waters, for ever and ever,
Through the burnt sands that reward not the giver;
Silent or songful thou nearest the sea.
Scatter thy life as the summer shower's pouring;
What if no bird through the pearl rain is soaring?
What if no blossom looks upward adoring?
Look to the life that was lavished for thee.

Almost the day of thy giving is over.
Ere from the grass dies the bee-haunted clover,
Thou wilt have vanished from friend and from lover;
What shall thy longing avail in the grave?
Give as the heart gives whose fetters are breaking,
Life, love, and hope, all thy dreams and thy waking;
Soon heaven's river thy soul-fever slaking,
Thou shalt know God and the Gift that He gave.

—Rose Terry Cooke.

## APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

Although this book is written for all, it is hoped that it will be especially useful to young people, and it would be a pleasure to know that it had led a few at least to adopt the practice it recommends.

The vast accumulation of wealth and the wondrous scientific inventions and discoveries of the last half-century will make this era memorable in all future ages. The people of no former age ever had such opportunities as lie before the rising generation. It may be said of almost any age, that the youth of that time had a better chance than their parents had; but the gain has been so enormous, the advance so astonishing in recent years, that it is true in a superlative degree of the young people

of to-day. Never before were the prospects so good for the speedy conquest of the world by Christianity. Never before would money reach so far or accomplish so much, and never before was there such abundant opportunity to invest it to the advantage of the kingdom of our Lord.

How will the two million members of the Epworth League, with the rest of the young people of Methodism, meet these opportunities and responsibilities? We believe the Christian young people of to-day are the most devoted the world has seen in a thousand years. We believe they are making progress, but question if they have yet awakened to a full consciousness of their supreme privileges.

Dr. J. F. Berry in a communication to the *Christian Advocate,* New York, a few months ago, said: "I have been reading to-day of the missionary crisis which is now upon our Church. I have been profoundly stirred by the appeal for an emergency fund to enable the Church to enter

many open doors. And I can not but feel that the day of opportunity for the young people of Methodism has dawned. If every member of the Epworth League who has hitherto given little or nothing to Christian missions would this year contribute one dollar to that cause, THE TOTAL GIFTS OF THE CHURCH WOULD BE INCREASED HALF A MILLION DOLLARS."

That would be a glorious result. But we believe that if every member of the League would begin to practice the giving of one-tenth of his income as the minimum of his offerings to God, that these members alone, besides assisting and stimulating every other enterprise of the Church, would make an offering of two million dollars for missions. We trust the open door will by multitudes be entered.

Begin to pray. Pray that the Lord of the harvest may send forth laborers into His vineyard. But while you pray remember that we are to co-operate with Him in this sending. He calls men and women to

this work, and endows them for it, but He has put into our hands the means by which they are to be sent, and to withhold these means is to hinder the answer to our own prayers.

Pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, so that sinners may be converted in rapidly increasing numbers, and believers enriched in spiritual grace and holy living.

Pray, but when you begin to pray begin to give, and bring the tithes into the storehouse and God will answer your prayers with opening heavens and descending showers according to His promise.

Be not afraid to trust the Lord and obey His Word, for no man ever yet did that but to his advantage. Take the Lord into partnership with you when you embark in business. Give Him His own faithfully, and He will give you wisdom and skill, and besides being blessed in your temporal affairs you will grow in grace and be possessed of a peace that is priceless. You

may be and remain poor, but, if so, you will prove that "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked;" worth more to you and worth more to God. You may become rich, and, if so, experience more largely what Jesus meant when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

*Begin now,* if you have not already done so, to pay the tithe, and continue in that way to the end. There is little need, however, for this last suggestion, for very few who begin are ever willing to cease the practice. It is so satisfactory, and brings such contentment, that while most persons soon begin to add free-will offerings, some increasing them till the tenth is multiplied, very few ever return to their former haphazard method.

*Begin now,* that you may have as long a time as possible to continue. If you are yet young it may mean many years, and, perhaps, years of great prosperity.

*Begin now,* because it will be easier for

you now. If later wealth increases, the tenth will seem so large a sum to give; and if wealth does not increase, but expenses do, it will seem so difficult to give the tenth of even a little; and in either case you might not begin at all.

*Begin now,* and if you grow rich you will be in less danger of being corrupted by your money. One of the advantages of giving a tenth is that under the blessing of God your prosperity will be greater, and yet if wealth comes there will be far less danger of its begetting selfishness or covetousness within you.

*Begin now,* because you owe it to God, to your Church, and to the world, and have already missed some blessings and come short in some duties. You may never get the account righted for the past, but you can keep it straight for the future.

Can you believe that God means less than this? Why has He sent this great wealth to us? Does it not simply mean the revealing of one more step, the unfold-

ing of one more purpose in the progress of His plan concerning the world? Are these riches to be lavished on ourselves or hoarded for our children? Emphatically, No! It seems almost impossible that the world should keep up its remarkable progress in invention and discovery and material advancement. No doubt there will continue to be advancement, but that the pace of the last half-century can be maintained seems incredible. It has been a brilliant epoch, but as such may it not be near its end? May it not be that, having given us this extraordinary age of material advancement, and having provided us with the remarkable facilities that are at hand, He expects the next hundred years to see the application of these things to the intellectual and spiritual melioration of the world? If this is His program, what happiness is yours to be entering this century with Him! What wondrous things will be accomplished if the millions of the Epworth League and kindred organizations

will lead on in this work! This is what we desire and expect to see.

*Begin now* the practice of those methods that will furnish the sinews of war in this twentieth-century struggle of light against darkness, and the Lord of hosts, whose battle it is, seeing we have done what we could, will give victory to His cause.

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